

June 2008

Footnotes

Washington Reading Corps News for the Journey



Important Reminders

- Forward your summer contact information to your local WRC Project Supervisor for a proactive member selection process.
- Have a great summer! We look forward to working with you again next year with the WRC!

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Questions? Want to submit a story? Please contact Donna Olson at dolson@esd.wa.gov.

The Impact of the WRC in 2007-2008

During the 2007-2008 program year, the Washington Reading Corps has impacted more than 80 schools across Washington. Although the year is not yet complete, we know that:

Over 8,000 students have been served through the WRC.

More than 250 AmeriCorps*State and AmeriCorps VISTA members have served in WRC schools across Washington.

More than 7,000 volunteers have been recruited at WRC schools. They have served **over 90,000 hours**.

Over \$100,000 in cash and in-kind donations has been given to WRC schools and programs.

Thank you to all school staff members, AmeriCorps members, WRC program staff, and volunteers who helped make the WRC great this year!

The WRC Celebrates National Volunteer Week and National AmeriCorps Week

National Volunteer Week (April 28th-May 3rd) is an opportunity for WRC schools to show appreciation for the many volunteers who help make the program great.

During the 2006-2007 school year, over 4,000 volunteers gave nearly 100,000 hours to WRC schools. This year, the WRC has already recruited over 7,000 volunteers to give their time to help struggling readers.

For National Volunteer Week this year, WRC schools showed their appreciation for their volunteers in a variety of ways.

Many schools throughout the WRC hosted Volunteer Appreciation celebrations, including breakfasts, dinners, and

teas. Volunteers received a variety of appreciation items, including certificates, t-shirts, and student-made arts and crafts.

In addition, the Governor's 2008 Volunteer Service Awards recognized outstanding volunteers from across the state of Washington. The awards ceremony took place on April 28th, and a total of seven WRC volunteers were recognized. These volunteers were presented awards by First Gentleman Mike Gregoire at the Governor's Mansion in Olympia.

Two weeks later, National AmeriCorps Week provided an opportunity for WRC schools and communities to thank their current AmeriCorps members and promote AmeriCorps to potential

members.

Many AmeriCorps members and program staff took the opportunity to attend fairs and recruitment events, hoping to promote national service to potential future members. Articles and editorials appeared in many local newspapers highlighting the impact of AmeriCorps members on WRC schools and communities.

Members also had the opportunity to reflect on their service by submitting a project to the Northwest National Service Symposium in Portland, Oregon, which took place on May 12-13th. WRC members submitted a variety of projects, including photography, literary pieces, and other artwork. Over 100 National Service participants and staff attended the event.

Five Washington Reading Corps schools hosted a total of seven legislators (plus a local mayor) during the month of May.

Legislators Visit WRC Schools

During the month of May legislators visited a number of Washington Reading Corps schools across the state. Five WRC schools hosted seven legislators (and a mayor), making May the busiest month for legislative visits this school year!

These visits were excellent opportunities to inform legislators about the benefits of the WRC program. It also gave them an opportunity to see AmeriCorps members in action and learn a little bit more about how different schools utilize their members.

In Clarkston, Grantham Elementary (with ESD 101) was visited by Senator Mark Schoesler, Representative Joe Schmick, and Clarkston Mayor Donna Engles. The visitors had the opportunity to read and



Rep. Fromhold reads with a student at Minnehaha Elementary in Vancouver.

eat lunch with students. They also answered questions from the students.

White Pass Elementary (with Community Youth Services) in Randle received a visit from Senator Swecker, who was able to observe AmeriCorps members tutoring two groups of kindergartners and discuss the WRC with the members as well as staff.

Two WRC schools in

Vancouver received visits from legislators. Martin Luther King Elementary (with ESD 112) was visited by Senator Craig Pridemore, while Minnehaha Elementary (also with ESD 112) was visited by Representative Bill Fromhold. At both schools, the visitors tutored a student and had a question and answer session with AmeriCorps members, school staff, and WRC program staff.

Toutlelake Elementary (also with ESD 112) in Toutle was visited by Representative Ed Orcutt. He had the opportunity to spend some time tutoring and also met with members and staff.

Visits from legislators serve an important role in informing legislators of the valuable impact the WRC has on schools. Thank you to everyone who worked to make these visits happen!



Tips on Inviting Legislators to Your School

In many cases, local WRC Project Supervisors or AmeriCorps members take the lead role in scheduling legislative visits. Here are some tips if you're interested in inviting a legislator to your school next year:

Call the legislator's Legislative Assistant (LA) first. The LA will most likely be your primary contact when trying to schedule a visit. You can ask them what sorts of activities the legislator might be

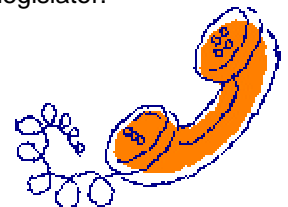
interested in. It's also important to establish with the LA what type of communication will work best for them (e.g. phone, email).

Send a formal invitation.

Tailor your invitation to each legislator and include room for activities the LA may have suggested the legislator would be interested in. The formal invitation can either be sent by mail or email, but ask the LA for their preference.

Follow up on your initial invitation. After sending the invitation, make sure you follow up by phone or email (whichever the LA has expressed a preference for).

Stay flexible. Legislators are usually busy, so every invitation may not be successful. Be prepared to approach more than one legislator.



Armin Jahr Elementary Publishes Anthology of Student Work

On Read Across America Day, students in Armin Jahr Elementary (with Community Youth Services) took three hours to create submissions for the school's first ever anthology of student work. Over 200 short stories, poems, and essays were submitted, and 22 were chosen to be published.

The school applied for a grant through the Bremerton School District to get the book published in hardcover and color to be placed in the school library to help get students excited about reading and

writing.

Since the students had limited time to create their submissions, there was no time for them to illustrate their stories. Instead, Rebecca Butorac, the AmeriCorps*VISTA member at the school, recruited online for illustrators.

The pieces are being illustrated by individuals from across the country and Canada. They include art students, professional illustrators, and a variety of amateur artists. These individuals are from such

diverse places as British Columbia, Canada, Florida, Pennsylvania, and California.

Next year, the anthology will be used to help jumpstart an after-school creative writing program for students.

There are also plans to publish the anthology more widely next year and use the sales as a fundraiser for the WRC and literacy program at Armin Jahr Elementary.

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Meany Middle School Celebrates Student Art

~Steve Pratt, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and Jason Sposeto, AmeriCorps*State

The Jaguar Arts Festival at Meany Middle School (with Solid Ground) was, without a doubt, the biggest and most positive event to hit Meany in the past seven years, as reported by our Principal. This event came as the result of community partnering of parents, teachers, literacy coaches, art coaches,

community members, former teachers, students, City Year, YMCA, WRC members, and the local media. Indeed, the rallying behind this event (which took place on Thursday, May 15) was immeasurably huge, and the payoff was just as great. Gallery walks, free art works, graffiti art, a talent show portion, a

silent auction: the entire event drew a crowd of about 500 people, celebrating our students' literacy achievements (100% student participation of posted poems) and art contributions. It was dumbfounding just how amazing and positive the whole thing was.

Summer Break: Tips for WRC Schools

It's that time of year again! The school year is ending and WRC teams are starting to recruit next year's WRC members for your schools. Several ways to help ensure that your school finds the member(s) that best fit your school are:

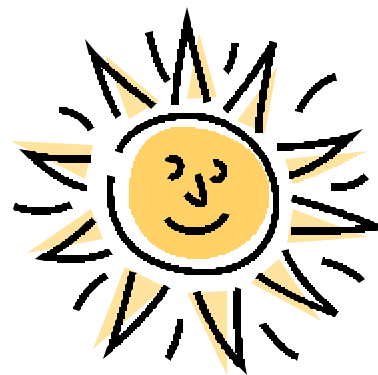
Stay in touch. Keep in contact with your local WRC Project Supervisor

and make sure they have current contact information for you over the summer.

Communicate your schedule. If you are going to be gone for vacation or unavailable during parts of the summer, let your local WRC Project Supervisor know so they can plan during the selection process.

Plan ahead. Think about possible dates for interviewing candidates throughout the summer break.

Thank you for your dedication to the program and to helping select quality applicants to serve in your schools!





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**WASHINGTON
READING CORPS**

WSC is a unit of

**Washington State
Employment Security**

Kirkwood Elem., WRC with OIC

"[A student] had been averaging 95 words a minute. ... I have been working with him since February and I am pleased to say that he is now averaging 125 words a minute."

Naval Avenue Elem., WRC with CYS

"The one-on-one tutoring sessions have helped [one of my students] pass each unit with ease. I am able to work intensely on individual stories and passages while having his undivided attention. I have come to the realization that this intensive, personal, and informed approach is what makes the WRC successful. ... In the right setting, even the most reticent student can become a champion of his own success."

Farwell Elementary, WRC Early Learning with ESD 101

"We have been talking about spring and plants this month. The kids have had fun planting their own flowers and watching them grow. They love watering their flowers, too! We have continued our Book It program, and it is great to see the children continue to fall in love with reading!"

Klickitat Head Start, WRC Early Learning with ESD 112

"The other day I had a parent come up to me and say that her daughter has been reading stories to her like I do in the classroom."

McDermoth Elem., WRC with CYS

"I recently took over a small reading group. The kids are flying through their grade level books and are far surpassing their previous test scores!"

Holmes Elem., WRC with ESD 101

"Two students in the third grade started the year off struggling. Thanks to the tutoring they have received through the WRC, they are currently two of the teacher's highest readers."

Paul Rumberg Elem., WRC with IMAC

"I've continued working with my second grader one-on-one. We just recently began incorporating his spelling list into our daily efforts. I hope that this will bring him better marks (and a little more faith in himself) on his weekly spelling tests. I also have him reading books above his grade level. I noticed that giving him books that were overly simplified was doing nothing for his esteem. Even though he doesn't get every word right in the higher level books, he enjoys the stories more and feels great about himself. He smiles genuinely, which is amazing!"

Mountain Way Elem., WRC with Skagit CAP

"Most recently we have had a student who usually does not do too well on tests receive a perfect score on a weekly reading test."

Whitney Early Learning Center, WRC EL with Skagit CAP

"We have restructured and reorganized the Dragon Club program. Our Head Start teacher commented on the amazing progress she is seeing in two of her students that attend. One child was thought to need an IEP next year but has just shot ahead in the past month. The teacher attributed it to the new format of Dragon Club. We have seen leaps and bounds in this child as well. Another child has been motivated and has motivated his mom to read, read, read to him because he wants to earn a book."

Dearborn Park Elem., WRC with Solid Ground

"One 2nd-grader in particular has been advancing very quickly lately. At first, she was very shy and stumbled over words, but now she is sounding words out, correcting herself, and reading on her own."

Toutle Lake Elem., WRC with ESD 112

"Our volunteers have remained with us throughout the school year, which we believe says a lot about the way volunteer activities are run around here. We have met/exceeded our volunteer recruitment goal (by 10!), and it's not even the end of the school year."

